

St Barnabas Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101541
Inspection date	25 September 2007
Inspector	Ruth Tharme
Setting Address	Orchard Way, Cheltenham,, Glos, GL51 7JY
Telephone number	01242 222219
E-mail	
Registered person	St Barnabas Church Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Barnabas Church Playgroup opened in September 1972 and is well established in the local community. It is situated in the church rooms of St. Barnabas Church in the Hesters Way area of Cheltenham. The group have the use of two large, and one smaller room within the building, and the enclosed outdoor area.

The playgroup is run by a committee of staff and parents and is open from 09.00 until 12.00 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and on Wednesday afternoons from 12.30 until 15.30, during school terms. It is registered to provide care for 26 children, aged between two and five years, at each session. At present there are 16 children on roll and of these, 11 are funded three-year-olds. The group do not currently support any children with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language.

Four members of staff work with the children, one of whom has completed the Certificate in Professional Management, Level 3. The other staff members have relevant qualifications and all have completed first aid and child protection training. Staff have many years experience

within the playgroup and are supported by the local authority early years advisor and the Playgroup and Toddler Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is actively promoted. They regularly enjoy fresh air and exercise as staff take care to plan opportunities for outdoor play on a daily basis. Hand-washing procedures are well established and toilet facilities are well equipped which means that children's risk of infection is reduced. If they fall ill, children are treated appropriately and parents are asked to collect them as soon as possible, so others do not become unwell. Staff hold relevant qualifications which means that children have access to first aid in an emergency. Suitable documentation is in place to ensure that clear records are maintained should a child have an accident or need medication.

Water bottles are readily available at all times which means that children help themselves to a drink whenever they need to. Staff have relevant information readily available so they are able to address children's dietary needs appropriately at snack times. The setting provides healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit, which promotes a balanced diet for the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy the warm and welcoming environment. Playrooms are attractively decorated, with examples of their work and photographs displayed throughout. The premises are bright, airy and clean so children are comfortable there. Play space is well organised which means that there is plenty of room for children to play and learn.

There is a wide range of resources on offer which means that children have much to occupy and engage them. Equipment is attractively present and is readily accessible so children are able to help themselves and make their own choices.

Staff are well deployed throughout the setting so children are consistently well supervised and supported. The staff team are vigilant and carry out a visual check of premises and resources at the start of each session. However, as there is no formal system of risk assessment in place there is a danger that not all hazards to children are noted and addressed appropriately on a regular basis.

Children are well aware of the procedures to follow in an emergency. Fire drills are held each term so they know what to do. The premises are kept secure so children are unable to leave unsupervised.

All staff members have completed child-protection training. This means that they are well equipped to recognise a child who may be at risk. Clearly written procedures are in place so staff are able to support and protect such children, should the need arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make good progress in all areas of their development as there is a good range and balance of activities on offer at each session. They enjoy a variety of adult-led and child-initiated activities, both in and out-of-doors.

Children are grouped according to their age and ability. This, along with the effective key-worker system, means that children are effectively supported in their play and development. Children are able to make decisions for themselves as staff take care to tell them about the activities available at the start of each session. Staff skilfully ask open questions, such as 'how did you get to play group today?' which actively encourages children's thinking.

Children feel valued, safe and relaxed in the setting. They quickly settle into their environment, playing happily and interacting well with their peers and carers.

Funded Nursery Education

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress in all areas of learning. Staff knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals is clear as they provide a wide range of activities and experiences which promote children's learning and development.

Key workers observe the children, and know them well, which enables them to adapt activities to meet individual needs and provide appropriate challenge. However, this is not reflected in written plans, which means that it is difficult for staff who know children less well to support their learning as effectively. Good use is made of time and resources so children are able to complete their activities successfully. Children's progress is carefully monitored using the stepping stones. Staff use the information gained to ensure that parents are well informed.

Children settle quickly into the group, effectively supported by staff. They are forming good relationships with their peers and carers and enjoy their self-chosen activities. They have a clear understanding of the boundaries set and consistently meet behavioural expectations. Communication, language and literacy are developing well. Children use language for communication and thinking as they recall and discuss past events. They are beginning to link sounds with letters as they sing the sound that starts their name at snack time. They use one-handed tools confidently and make marks with a variety of tools and resources. Mathematical development is also progressing well. Children count confidently and enjoy problem solving, working out how many biscuits are needed to allow one for each child. Frequent opportunities for exploration and investigation promote their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children observe and imitate what adults do, developing their imagination as they play. They enjoy music and singing, joining in with action songs and rhymes. Physical development is also well promoted. Children show respect for each other's body space and demonstrate an awareness of healthy practices, such as eating healthily and implementing hand-washing routines.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a well implemented equal opportunities policy. Staff support children effectively, according to their individual needs. Children readily make choices for themselves,

as resources are easily accessible to all. The range of toys and equipment reflects diversity so children develop their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and faiths.

A member of staff has received specific training which means that children with learning difficulties or disabilities are effectively supported. The setting has good links with other professionals, such as a speech therapist, so children have access to additional support when needed.

Children behave well as staff take a calm and consistent approach to managing behaviour. Positive language and praise are used appropriately.

Children benefit from the strong partnership with parents. Clear information about the setting and the curriculum is provided, and staff are available to speak with parents on a daily basis, as well as at more formal one-to-one meetings. This ensures that they are well informed about the play group and their child's progress. On arrival, parents are encouraged to stay and choose a book with their child. The book is taken home at the end of the session so parents are actively involved in their child's learning. There is a written complaints procedure in place, but staff are not sufficiently knowledgeable about requirements for recording and sharing information about any concerns raised. This means that there is currently no system in place to ensure that parents have access to relevant information should a complaint be made.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Arrangements for appointing new staff are clear and appropriate so children are cared for by suitably trained and experienced adults. Checks are carried out on new employees but there is no system in place for reviewing suitability which means that staff are not currently rechecked on a regular basis.

Good use is made of staff, space and resources so children are supported effectively throughout. High staff ratios also mean that children receive good levels of adult support. An ongoing training programme ensures that staff are suitably qualified for their roles. The annual appraisal scheme helps to identify individual training needs.

The daily register is well maintained so an accurate record of children's attendance is in place. Documentation is stored appropriately so it is secure and ensures children's confidentiality. Parents have access to information about the conditions of registration as the certificate is clearly displayed.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. There is a well-established team in place and all staff members are clear about their role and responsibility. There are clear strategies in place to monitor the effectiveness of the setting. A programme of self evaluation and input from other professionals, such as a Foundation Stage consultant, help staff to identify and address areas for improvement. Action plans in place to address any issues demonstrate the setting's commitment to improvement. However, the setting has yet to develop links with local schools and providers, which would ease children's transition to other settings.

The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, three recommendations were made to improve the quality of care. Firstly, the play group was asked to develop their child-protection statement, to provide clear information regarding all aspects of the groups procedures. The policy statement has been reviewed and now provides clear information for staff and parents about precisely what action will be taken should a concern be raised. Next, the group was asked to include contact details for Ofsted within the complaints procedure. This has been added to the policy document so parents now have access to information on how to contact the regulator. Finally, the group was asked to request from parents prior written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. This is now routinely requested when children join the setting, and ensures that children only receive treatment that is in accordance with their parent's wishes.

At the last inspection of funded nursery education three key issues were raised. The setting was asked to provide parents with more regular information about their child's progress, and how the Foundation Stage assists their child's development. A clear information pack is now provided which gives useful details about the curriculum. In addition, all planning is displayed so parents know what activities their children will be engaged in each week. Staff are available to speak with parents on a daily basis, and one-to-one meetings are arranged to ensure that parents are now well informed about progress. Secondly, the group was asked to provide a greater variety of mark-making resources. There is now a good selection of paints, pens, crayons and markers available throughout the session to support children's learning and development. Lastly, the group was asked to provide children with opportunities to build and construct, using a variety of joining materials. A range of glues, string, tape and ribbon are now readily available so children are able to experiment with joining materials in a variety of ways.

Overall, the setting has made good progress in addressing the issues raised at the last inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- devise and implement robust systems to identify risks, both in and out of doors, and to address them appropriately
- develop knowledge and understanding of legislation regarding the recording and sharing of information about complaints
- review procedures to ensure that staff suitability is reviewed regularly

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop the planning cycle to ensure that future plans reflect practice and identify what individual children are expected to learn
- further develop links with local schools and providers to support children's transition more effectively

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk